

SBA Success Story: The Dinner Studio



Katherine Christensen and Gloria Otten, Owners

The Dinner Studio was born out of the realization that almost nobody has time to cook on a regular basis anymore. More and more people are turning to convenience meals loaded with fat, salt, sugar, and preservatives or “fast food”.

Dinner Studio co-owners, Katherine Christensen and Gloria Otten, shared similar views on the need for an affordable and convenient way for families in San Diego to eat well everyday. Ms. Christensen left a busy law practice to become a Professional Personal Chef and Ms. Otten, having spent most of her professional life in the field of restaurants and catering, began her career as a Professional Personal Chef when she moved to Southern California. As Professional Personal Chefs, they were constantly meeting people who could use a little (or a lot) of help in the kitchen. So they put their heads together and created The Dinner Studio, which marries the best aspects of a personal chef service and fast meal preparation at an affordable price. And it’s fun!

Katherine and Gloria strive to provide an environment where busy people can still prepare “home cooked” meals for their families in a homemade atmosphere, with fun, friends, and a lot of help. The Dinner Studio’s goal is to create a space in which someone can create the bulk of their household’s monthly meals in a few hours, with as little stress and as much help as possible.

The Dinner Studio opened its first location in 2003 in Vista and then added a second location in Tierrasanta this June. The expansion was funded in part by SBA guaranteed loans through US Bank. The two locations enjoy a regular clientele of 800 families today, and with the planned addition of several new locations, have a goal of expanding that number to 1,600 by the end of 2006.

Katherine and Gloria are clients of the Small Business Development Center – North San Diego County. In the beginning, they received help developing their marketing plan, consultation regarding the process of incorporating, and more. To find out more about the SBDC visit their website at www.sandiegosmallbiz.com. The SBDC is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration. .